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FANNY DAVENPORT.

THERE is a quiet little house in Forty-fifth Street, New York, which the passers-by scarcely notice, yet in it is living a lady, who, within a few years, has attained a prominence upon the stage which has made her pleasant, cheery features known to all the intelligent theatre-goers of the city. Prominent as her position is, she has not yet passed the number of years which indicates that she can be called "old maidish." The freshness of her youth has continued until to-day, and her *naïveté* is as it was when, in her early days, she adored Dickens, and wept over the sorrows of Little Nell. In her enthusiasm she wrote him a long letter, full of thanks for the pleasure which the great reader and writer of nature had given her. It was only when she had reached her tenth year that she received, as a Christmas present from her father, E. L. Davenport, a copy of Dickens's works, which held up life to her as in a mirror. She said in her letter that she was the daughter of an actor and actress; and her heart was touched by the sad story of *Dora's* love life, and was made strong by the infallible earnest truth of *Little Dorrit*. Her faith in the success of her future life gave her the boldness to say she would have "a play made from all his books, and never play any parts but the beautiful characters he had created." On the arrival of Mr. Dickens in America, among his first letters he wrote the following: "If the Miss Davenport receiving this is the Fanny Davenport who wrote a long letter some years ago to Mr.

Dickens, will she give him the opportunity of thanking her for the child's gift he has never forgotten." Miss Davenport keeps this terse letter among her choicest treasures—close to the diamonds which have excited both the envy and the admiration of her enthusiastic audiences. There is little doubt that Miss Davenport, who is not a mere child of the stage, ornamented for display, holds this letter of Dickens as among her chiefest jewels.

Fanny Davenport is now twenty-seven years old; was born in London, England, at the time her father was making a most successful tour with Anna Cora Mowatt. Almost from her cradle her mind has been associated with the lives and performances of actors and actresses. Commencing her career she did not imagine all the applause of the public, and the trophies of victory from the critics of the press, were

to be gained simply by a pretty face. It is doubtful even if she has a consciousness of the beauty which enchants so many. Her course has been one of conscientious, hard, industrious labor, and a firm determination to earn praise, not simply to win it. Her winsome face has not been the only attraction to the public, for it has been effectually concealed in her representation, for example, of *Ruth Tredgett*, in "Charity," where she represented such a disreputable tramp that no station-house would have given her a night's lodging. Her first appearance was at the Howard Athenæum, in Boston, and when she took the part of the child in "Metamora," she was well

dress has passed into a proverb, so would her house-furnishing become a model, could it be publicly displayed. Heavy antique designs, wrought in dark woods, upholstered in rich, deep shades of purple, seem to set off the airy bits of statuary she delights in. A marble Mercury poised on one toe adorns a pedestal; two struggling Cupids skim across a second block of marble; a dainty Psyche bends to brush a butterfly from the leaf that trembles beneath its weight. Rare Japanese vases, Sevres urns, and carvings of ivory, and lacquers of Japan, with other articles of *vertu*, decorate her drawing-room.

But it is in the suite of rooms above stairs that Fanny Davenport is most at home—a library, dressing-room and a bed-room opening together.

The writer of this article went in search of her one morning lately; and, perched on a step-ladder, dexterously handling a hammer, was the public favorite.

From her elevation she began detailing to him her grievances.

The upholsterer's man had failed to come; the man who did some work for her the day before was "color-blind and figure-crazy"—he had hung two landscapes wrong side up, "and they were not Turner's," she added, "so it made quite a difference in their general appearance. In utter desperation I went at it myself," she said, "and find that I'm equal to hanging a lambrequin, and that is equal to capital punishment."

Then she came off her vibrating perch, assuring me it was a "treacherous hussy," and when the gender was doubted she said she had been "off it twice that morning, and dis-



FANNY DAVENPORT.

received and her pertness and prettiness admired. Her head was not turned; she became a close student; and, step by step, she has ascended the ladder until few rungs remain between her and a world-wide fame.

Her career actually dates from her engagement by Augustin Daly at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. When Miss Agnes Ethel was ill she took her part in "Play," as *Rosa*, made a hit, and since then has had unwavering success. Her toilet—the exquisite taste she displays in harmonizing colors and adapting various modes to her form—has made her the study of the fashionable world; modest and refined taste in all her apparel is a distinguishing feature. We could say more without exhausting our subject, but content ourselves with copying from a neat little sketch of a peep at her home: for, as Fanny Davenport's taste in

covered it was a Mis-step Ladder," which settled its femininity at once. Against the dark maroon velvet paper on the walls hang the most noted faces that have looked across the footlights in the past. The fragile, *petite* figure of Rachel, like a panther in its suppleness and capability of dangerous passion. The beautiful Mlle. Mars; Mrs. Abington, the original Lady Teazle; the unmistakeable Irish face of Miss O'Niel; the big nose and shot-away chin of Peg Woffington (which rather weakens the belief in the orange-peddler's beauty), Garrick, Siddons, and the wonderful Dejazet dispute the palm of attraction with later stars; for here among them is a fine painting of Forrest, as *King Lear*, and a crayon head of Parepa Rosa, to which is attached an autograph letter.

Between Wilkie Collins and Gustave Doré, hangs a large, well-painted photograph of Clara Morris,

which Miss Davenport purchased in San Francisco. In all the house there are but two visible pictures of its beautiful mistress, one a little colored imperial *carte*, that, burned at all its edges, survived the fire at the old Fifth Avenue; the other, the delicious *basso rilievo*, taken by Landy in Cincinnati. In this picture the drapery has so marble-like a fall, the face with its closed eyes and powder-whitened hair has so statue-like an effect, it is hard to believe the photograph was taken from a living woman. Then Miss Davenport displays her newly acquired treasures—about fifty old books collected by the late Peter Abel, and a large volume containing the earliest efforts of photography, over which she laughs a dozen times a day.

—D. Wilkins.

CIMABUE AND HIS PUPIL.

ON a certain day in the year 1260, the whole city of Florence appeared to be in motion. The roofs of the houses were filled with spectators, the balconies crowded, and the streets thronged. Few seemed to understand exactly what was the occasion. Some said a miracle was to be performed. All were in eager expectation of something strange and wonderful.

At length the deep, solemn chant of the monks was heard, and a long procession of holy fathers appeared in sight. The loud impatience of the populace was now awed into silence, while the monks proceeded along the streets, their heads covered with cowls, and their long black robes giving an unearthly appearance to their figures; yet from the eyes that glanced beneath their dark hoods might be discerned expressions of triumph and exultation; there was none of the *misericordia* of their usual deportment. They were on their way to the Church of Santa Maria Novella. The procession advanced along the Borgo Allegri, which took its name from the joyous occasion. The picture of the Virgin Mary, larger than life, was borne on a triumphal car, by milk-white steeds, with nodding plumes, and harnessed with blooming wreaths. The Tuscan girls preceded it, dressed in white robes, and strewing flowers. Every little while, a bell was rung, and the host elevated. To the joyous acclamations of the multitude, that shook the air, profound silence succeeded; every knee was bent; again the bell rang, and all was life and animation. Then came a new procession of priests, with the young choristers bearing their wax candles and consecrated palms, and finally Cimabue himself, the young artist, crowned with the laurel wreath, and followed by the nobles of Florence.

The procession slowly moved toward the Church of Maria Novella; and there the Virgin was received by the holy brotherhood with fresh honors, and placed in her new residence. High mass was performed, and the day concluded with feasting and mirth; while, in the evening, the Arno reflected from its glassy bosom the fire-works which arose with new acclamations from the enthusiastic multitude.

Cimabue was a descendant of the Gondi family, one of the most noble in Florence. They had given a long line of saints to the calendar; and now the last count determined to adorn the family chapel with rich paintings. But where were the artists to be found? Not in Italy. The destructive wars had crushed the arts, and nothing remained worthy of the name. It was necessary to send to Greece for painters. They came, and, however imperfect were their works, fired the genius of the young Cimabue. After studying and becoming familiar in practice and in theory with their manner, he abandoned it for a better; and, inspired, as he said, "by the blessed mother herself, who sat to him in her own person," he produced a painting of her to adorn the church dedicated to her worship. It was no sooner beheld, than it was pronounced a miracle. A day was appointed in which it was to be carried to the place of its destination, with divine honors, a portion of which were showered upon the head of the artist.

Encouraged by this success, Cimabue ventured to paint without the immediate patronage or inspiration of the Virgin Mary. He now produced a picture of Christ crucified, with the mother and St. John near;

but it is evident his conceptions went far beyond his execution, as he was reduced to the necessity of putting written labels into their mouths, to express the sentiments of the individuals.

Of all his admirers none was more ardent than Giotto, a simple hind, in the duke his father's service, who had been appointed to the honorable office of guarding the flocks among the hills of Tuscany. Cimabue had saved his life; but this was not the only source of his enthusiasm—he had been sometimes admitted to a sight of his paintings, was a worshipper of his Maria at the Church Novella, and now might be daily seen in the fields with a piece of chalk in his hand, sketching figures on the rocks, while his sheep were grazing near him.

In one of Cimabue's rambles over his paternal domains, he was struck with a drawing of a lamb on one of the smooth rocks. It seemed to him very remarkable; and, inquiring who had made it, he learned that it was Giotto. He immediately sought out the father, and offered to take the boy as a pupil.

Giotto well repaid his instructions. He at once threw off the fetters of the Greeks, with whom the art had been degenerating from the time of Apelles, and who now had little to bestow on the Italians, after having stimulated them to the cultivation of their native powers.

The extreme rapidity with which Giotto advanced in design, undoubtedly arose from the study of the ancient sculpture, many specimens of which had already been discovered among the ruins of the ancient cities and villas.

His pure taste soon discarded the use of labels. "I must express by my pencil," said he, "what Dante would by words."

This was indeed a difficult task, and imperfectly accomplished; yet he arrived at so much excellence as to be called the pupil of nature, and marked out the path in which the art ought to be pursued. He did not confine himself to painting in fresco (the use of oil was then unknown), but executed figures in mosaic also. One of these is preserved, representing Christ walking on the water, and the disciples in the boat, exhibiting each characteristic signs of fear and amazement. This was afterward placed over the great entrance to St. Peter's Church at Rome, and is known by the name of "Giotto's Boat."

The devotion and constant deference of Giotto to Cimabue, was a grateful tribute to that noble artist; for the pupil had now far surpassed the master, though always yielding him the attention of a son. Cimabue bequeathed to his young friend the favor of his admiring fellow citizens, and the friendship of his family.

At that time Dante had just become known as a poet. Between him and Giotto a strict friendship was formed. They might well consider themselves engaged in a common cause; for it is difficult to mark a line of distinction between the two arts of poetry and painting, when their respective operations upon the character are superficially considered. Painting, however, has a tendency to abstract the mind from the causes of popular excitement; while poetry sometimes connects an author with the heart-stirring interests of social life. This was the case with Dante; he was engaged in violent factions, and finally exiled from his native city, Florence. Previously, however, he was one day contemplating Giotto's picture of St. Francisco, where he represents the various scenes of that saint's life in thirty-two pieces. "I perceive," said he, "you will win immortality."

"Not unless you will secure it to me, by permitting me to paint your portrait," replied the artist.

Dante consented; and it is to Giotto that the world owes the portrait of the illustrious poet.

The fame of the artist could not be confined to Florence. Pope Benedict sent for him to Rome, and employed him in the Vatican, and in St. Peter's Church, having selected Giotto on account of the perfection of an O that he drew with so much accuracy that it has passed into an Italian proverb: "Round as Giotto's O."

While Dante was in exile at Ravenna, he sent to Giotto to join him; when there, he painted several pieces in fresco, for the churches; and, on his return

to Florence, was sent for by the king of Naples. Soon after his arrival he heard of the death of Dante. He was employed to paint in the chapel of the Monastery of St. Chiara, which had just been completed. The subjects he selected were scenes from the Old and New Testament. And many said that his manner of treating his subject was through the inspiration of Dante. He seemed to entertain something of the same idea himself, and it was fully believed that the poet appeared to him in a dream, and suggested the composition. His death took place in 1336, at the age of sixty. He was buried in the Church of St. Maria del Fiore, at Florence, and the city erected a marble statue over his tomb.

FORTUNE-TELLING.

"Ah, my pretty lady! show me your hand, and let me tell to you what I read thereon. The old have sometimes cunning eyes."

The gypsy woman has been bribed by an ancient lover of the fair Amaryllis, whose hand is extended, to beguile her into sweet fancies, and the venerable Adonis is peeping from behind the curtains to see the progress of the plot.

"Silver or gold, lady? There are lines of both here, or my palmistry is at fault, and which shall it be? Your future promises much riches."

Evidently the charming demoiselle has little need of either, beyond the dictates of ambition, as may be noticed by the surroundings of her boudoir, which is grandly curtained and arras'd. The gilded mirrors, the heavy carpet on which the foot-falls are unheard, the rich carvings of the furniture, are all indicative of that happy state of society in which Hymen is free to choose without fear or favor. He has been the prime mover in almost all things since Venus conquered Mars. He overthrew Troy, vanquished Egypt, and is no myth to be put away with a flourish of the hand. Since Venus sprang from the Cytherean Sea, as full of beauty as when she led Paris after Helen to his own misfortune, he has been—Cupid, the conqueror.

The wandering crone has learned her lesson well, and her own palm has been crossed by the mighty magician that has let fall the scales from human eyes ever since "Adam delved and Eve span." There is a cunning leer, too, in the wrinkled face—a wise expression about the toothless mouth, even the posture itself is in excellent keeping with the story, "Shall I tell your fortune, my pretty one?" Neither, we fancy, is the elderly bohemienne alone in this conspiracy with the gentleman behind the curtain. The look of the companion figure is replete with anxious approval, and the confidential way in which she lays her hands upon the shoulder, has a wonderful indication of what is uppermost in her mind. But the charming representative of the *ancien regime*, perhaps, has an idea of her own; will test the inducements held out to her well before she finally decides, and is playing a game of her own choosing. Love not only laughs at locksmiths, but it has a sort of prescient wisdom that sees through plots, and counterplots to its own advantage. Princess or peasant, it is all the same, and will not be bartered or sold, if it is worth the having.

Far away, it may be, is the archer whose arrows are only silver tipped; but her heart has been hit by them, and the wound can only be healed by the hand that gave it. It is not always true, as the French proverb has it, "Love does much, but money does all things." As frequently it is reversed, and though gold may do much, love may be omnipotent after all. Such, we think, is the story of the picture whose title heads this sketch. The lover, whose love she holds dearest, may be some poor but valiant soldier, he may be a struggling artist, or some sailor ploughing the vasty deep in search of lands as yet unknown, with whose discovery he will gain his knighthood and his sovereign's accolade. She thinks that she has chosen the safer road, and no doubt she has. Wise little head! Let your heart be your own fortune-teller, it will prophecy far more truly than the gaudily dressed crone who attempts to read the lines on your rosy-hued hand.

—F. Wright.